THE

CREOLE;

OR,

THE HAUNTED ISLAND.

BRITISH MUSEUM

THE

CREOLE;

OR,

THE HAUNTED ISLAND.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY

S. ARNOLD, JUNIOR.

VOL. I.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

PREFACE.

HAVING completed my book, I feel myſelf authorized by preſcription, to write either a Preface or an *Apology*; but as I have ever held it a maxim, that a work which needs an Apology has no buſineſs before the Public, I ſhall not pay myſelf ſo ill a compliment as to make one.

The attention and pains beſtowed on a work of this deſcription cannot be ſuppoſed to have been very great —in a work profeſſedly rhetorical, we may look for labour and learning;

but what pleaſes and delights in that caſe, would, in ſlighter compoſitions, fatigue and diſguſt.

Modern novel, and other light ſpecies of writing, may be compared to ſimple oratory, which, though it be peculiarly intereſting, can never arrive at ſo high a ſtate of perfection as written diſquiſitions. Cicero has advanced, "that wiſdom and excellence in books, lies in the diſcovery of abſtruſe and unknown principles; but in oratory," (to the careleſſneſs of which I compare the generality of novel writing) "we ought never to depart from the uſual forms of ſpeech, or the received maxims of common ſenſe."

We

We will, therefore, nominate the CREOLE (if the Reader pleaſes) a ſort of oratorical effort,--and none will then look, I truſt, for more than they will find.

It is by no means in the province of a Preface, to admit the Reader to the ſecrets of the Author's ſtory, however it may acquaint him with his plan.—I ſhall therefore only obſerve, that I think I have purſued an uncommon ſearch; that I have been making an enquiry into the uncultivated force and ſtrength of nature, in a manner which few have done before me; and, as that is the caſe, I take ſome merit to myſelf, though

I hope no more than others will be ready to allow me.

As men ſeldom tell truth when they pretend to have a mean opinion of themſelves; I ſhall make no ſuch aſſeveration. It is a ſufficient proof of ſelf-complacency, that a man commits himſelf to the world, and puts his own portrait, or the portrait of his mind, in the ſhop-window of every bookſeller.

As my ſearch has been ſingular, perhaps ſome will think it unnatural —to ſuch however I will offer my excuſe, that novelty muſt now and then be purchaſed at the expence of nature.

nature. In ſaying this, I do not mean to acknowledge myſelf guilty of having paid ſo much for it; but only to guard againſt a miſunderſtanding which may be prejudicial to my purpoſe.

If I have thruſt myſelf on the world uninvited, I truſt I come in ſuch a way that I ſhall offend no one by my preſence.—If I have entered the literary liſts, I have entered without the wiſh to engage with any opponent, and therefore truſt, I ſhall come off without a wound.

I do not mean by this hint to parry the fair thruſts that may be made at my poor fame by the judges of the

fight, by whom I am on all ſides ſurrounded.

I am not of ſufficient magnitude to dread a ſerious attack, nor do I aſpire to the negative triumph of eſcaping attention from my inſignificance.

I think that in coming before the world, I have choſen a ſubject which requires only a mediocrity of talent for its execution; and have, therefore, a right to hope for more kindneſs than if I had attempted ſomething of greater conſequence.

The flight I have taken, is not high enough to endanger my neck

neck by a fall.—I ſoar but a little height, and if my wings fail me, I hope they will not ſnap at once, but bear me down gently to that ſilent obſcurity from whence I have endeavoured to riſe. In this confeſſion I depart from the opinion of Johnſon, who ſays, if I recollect his words—" To attempt much is always laudable, even when the enterprize is above the ſtrength that undertakes it."

If I dared advance an opinion in oppoſition to this Coloſſus of literature, it would be, that to attempt more than we are competent to perform, is impudent and aſſuming. I hope I have not done this, and there-

fore ought to eſcape the critical cenſures of thoſe learned judges, who ſit in monthly inveſtigation for the condemnation or applauſe of thoſe daring criminals, who voluntarily place themſelves at the bar of their tribunal.

If I have failed to excite intereſt, I am not fit for the taſk I have attempted to perform. In that caſe I will attempt it no more; which is a promiſe of conſolation to thoſe who read me through with patience; though even by theſe I ought not to be condemned, ſince if I am found dull and uninſtructing, I am not ſo for want of endeavour to be otherwiſe; and, unhappily, our endeavours

vours to pleaſe and improve, are not always ſo fortunate as to be ſucceſsful. On this ſubject the world, and not individuals, will decide; of the latter, ſome will praiſe from partiality, and ſome condemn from prejudice or pique. Some with faſtidious ſenſe will read without pleaſure, and ſome without any ſenſe at all, will read without reflection. To fair criticiſm I ſhall be obliged for improvement; to unfair condemnation I ſhall be obliged for a triumph in contempt.

Some untoward and unlooked for events, have cauſed a tedious procraſtination in my progreſs; and thoſe events may, in ſome parts, have

have given me a turn to ſerioufneſs and moral reflection, which thoſe, who know my diſpoſition, may perhaps think artificial.

As far as the nature of my work would allow, however, I have endeavoured to mix my ſcenery; and if I have the mortification of finding that ſome accuſe me of too much ſolemnity, I ſhall have the ſatisfaction of knowing alſo, that none will reprobate me for too much levity.

I am now about to enter my ordeal—of the critics, I confeſs my apprehenſions. They are a literary volcano, whoſe lava has often overwhelmed

overwhelmed that ſoil, which, if cultivated, might have afforded a moderate, if not abundant produce.

I return thanks to my Subſcribers; and I think it neceſſary to add, that I have uſed no exertions whatever, by which I might have ſwelled my Volume by a numerous and extenſive liſt.

S. ARNOLD, Jun.

Duke Street, Weſtminſter,
September, 1796.

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THE

CREOLE.

CHAP. I.

THE BIRTH OF THE CREOLE.

"WISDOM and the withſtanding of temptation, are as incongruous in youth, as levity and incontinence are unſeaſonable in age."

Such were the words of Selim, emperor of Morocco. He had juſt aſcended the throne of his forefathers, and had been led to this reflection

by the birth of a ſon, whoſe mother he had purchaſed as a ſlave in Jamaica, where he had reſided a conſiderable time, and whence he had been lately recalled; leaving behind him the young Indian and his mother, with orders that they ſhould follow him as ſoon as convenience ſhould permit.

Elmira, whoſe beauty had made her the miſtreſs of his affections, was a native of Circaſſia; her complexion was delicately fair, and her face and form moulded by the hand of grace.

Selim of Morocco, thought and acted like other men, with this difference, that his mind being ſtronger than that of moſt men, his actions, according to their bent, were more eminently good, or more ferociouſly bad.

bad. In the early ſtages of his life, before reflection and experience had ſoftened his character and matured his judgment, and before diſappointment and diſguſt had embittered and rendered callous his benevolence, his heart had been diſtinguiſhed for thoſe fierce and manly virtues, mingled with thoſe ſofter feelings, which conſtitute the qualities of a nervous and maſculine mind.

The foregoing ſentence therefore was the reſult of a long train of reflections; he had now a ſon, from a a favourite whom he affectionately loved; and he wiſhed, if poſſible, to try the ſtrength of nature, by yielding him up to her precepts. He was deſirous of his merely imbibing notions of right and wrong; and wiſhing him rather to decline experi-

encing the pleaſures of the one, than to be endangered by falling into the ſnares and guilt of the other. By long intercourſe with a world which he knew was bad, he had himſelf often experienced the temptations to evil, and from thoſe dangers had learned to wiſh his ſon might be exempt.

To accompliſh this ſcheme, he was ſenſible his own court produced no example of ſufficient purity, and feared his whole empire could ſcarce furniſh a retirement of ſufficient ſecrecy.

He however at length recollected a ſituation ſuited to his intention, where he might ſcreen his ſon from the ſight of all men, and where, as there was no temptation to vice, its contami-

contamination could never be ſuppoſed to reach.

This was a caſtle, ſituated ſixty miles from the capital. It was an ancient ſtructure, and had been built for ſecrecy rather than for ſecurity. It was erected on a flat extenſive iſland, encompaſſed by a broad and beautiful lake, whoſe current it divided, and ſurrounded by a wall, whoſe height rather than ſtrength afforded ſecurity. One ſmall gate, over a ſlight draw-bridge, was the ſole entrance by which admiſſion could be obtained, and within the wall was a dark and thick wood. To this caſtle, which had remained uninhabited and undiſturbed for many years, and which appeared to Selim as the fitteſt receptacle for his young ſon, he reſolved

to repair. Accordingly he left his palace early in the morning, and departed with a few guards and a proper officer to ſurvey the building, and before night alighted at the door of a ſmall cottage on the borders of the lake; here he procured a homely lodging for the night, and by break of day ſat forward on his ſearch through the iſland.

His chief care was to examine the outer wall, and to obſerve that no means of communication could be contrived, and to give orders that a diligent ſearch might be made, leſt any robbers, or other people, had ſecured a retreat in this place. Having well inſpected the wall, he proceeded to the caſtle; he wandered through the rooms and the halls; the

ſpacious

ſpacious galleries eſcaped not his notice; but no traces of human reſidence could be found.

At length he came to a door half open, and looking in, he ſtarted, ſeeing a pale and ghaſtly appearance paſs lightly before him; he entered the inſtant he could recollect himſelf, and finding no one, nor ſeeing any thing, he paſſed on; convinced it might and muſt be the effects of his own imagination, which, wrapt in the gloomineſs of the ſurrounding ſcenes, had depicted an appearance of viſionary creation, and exiſting only in his own conception.

He now came to what had formerly been the gardens. The plot was ſtill remaining, and nature had provided an abundant and beautiful

collection of wild and aromatic ſhrubberies, which bordered the whole.

At the end a rich orchard, replete with groves and rivulets, cloſed the ſcene, and loſt itſelf in the mazes of an impenetrable wood.

Theſe grounds, with the caſtle, being ordered into proper repair by the Emperor, and having defired further and more deliberate ſearch to be made through the caſtle, woods, and outſkirts, he returned, perfectly reſolved and ſatisfied, to the capital.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE CASTLE.

WHILE returning to Morocco, the emperor often thought of the phantom which had croſt him in the caſtle; and on his arrival at the palace, found his beloved Elmira and the young Creole, who had juſt arrived before him. He then communicated to her the errand he had been upon, and his intentions reſpecting their ſon.

"If it is my lord's deſire," ſaid Elmira, "that I ſhould live and die ſecluded in the caſtle of Othen, I ſhall live there with regret, becauſe

we cannot but regret to leave thoſe to whom we are bound by ties of the ſtrongeſt affection, and to whoſe endearments we are indebted for every bleſſing we enjoy. But I ſhall die there with content, ſince it is your pleaſure to command it; and ſhall need no other reward, than having given pleaſure to one who has loved me ſo well."

"You miſtake me," replied Selim, "though I rejoice in your miſtake, ſince it has given you an opportunity of expreſſing yourſelf thus affectionately. But it is not you whom I would wiſh to ſeclude; you have tried the world, and thoſe who have tried it know how to combat with it: it is my ſon only whom I wiſh to ſecrete, that by keeping him to a certain age from the knowledge of all

all ill, his mind being naturally virtuous, muſt lean to virtue: for thoſe only can fall by vice, in whom vice preponderates by habitual and pernicious indulgence—By this means I ſhall have a ſon worthy of my throne, and ſhall leave a bleſſing to my ſubjects, and enſure to myſelf the prayers of all whoſe prayers can avail me, namely, thoſe of the good."

"If," ſaid Elmira, "I cannot approve the reſolution you have taken, I can at leaſt be ſilent, as in duty becomes me, and ſubmit to your determination; not doubting your reaſons and intentions are good, though I confeſs your arguments for them are beyond my comprehenſion."

"The caſtle," replied Selim, "is a beautiful and romantic habitation,

and the Prince my ſon, will be happy in it. Seeing nothing but what is within his reach, he will want nothing more than he poſſeſſes; and he who enjoys all that he wiſhes, is at the ſummit of earthly felicity. I have ordered the neceſſary workmen and artificers, and the caſtle will ſoon be in a ſtate fit for his reception." Having opened this buſineſs to Elmira they ſeparated—Selim to the concerns of the ſtate, and Elmira to the contemplation of her ſon's deſtiny, and the extreme ſingularity of the Emperor's deſigns.

In the mean time the workmen were purſuing their occupations at the caſtle.

The interior of the wall, which ſurrounded the iſland, was hung with rich

rich cluſters of vines and other fruits, in all ſuch places as the ſun's rays could penetrate; and beneath the wood, was an uninterrupted and beautiful walk of orange and citron trees; and the luxuriant fragrance of theſe, and other fruits, emitted a delicious, and refreſhing odour, through the whole iſland. Having paſſed through the wood in which one place only, that near the gate, was free and open: the ſpectator's eye was met by the moſt beautiful proſpect in nature—a rich and chryſtalline rivulet, which brought in numberleſs fiſhes with it from the lake, meandering through incloſures and ſmall woods, which often interrupted the view, iſſued from the oppoſite part of the iſland and divided itſelf into branches, which loſt themſelves on that ſide of the wood near the entrance,

trance, through which they found paſſage, and joined the great lake without.

The beauty of the place, though partly the work of nature, had been much aſſiſted by art, and the elegant ſtructure of the caſtle, at once airy and majeſtic, lugubrious and fantaſtic, created an emotion of ſurpriſe and pleaſure in the heart of every beholder; its ſituation was ſuch as to ſhelter it beneath the woods from the bleak and tempeſtuous winds; and the gardens ſpread in uniform elegance and ſimplicity to a conſiderable extent. The turrets of the edifice commanded a ſuperb view of the whole iſland, and the encloſures, which were even now well ſtocked with the deer and game which the country afforded, formed a pleaſing relief

relief to the eye on the borders of the wood.

Nothing could be more fruitful than this delightful place, and yet for many years it had remained uninhabited!

To account for this we muſt relate the hiſtory of its ancient poſſeſſors.

The laſt lord who had abandoned it, inherited by right of ſucceſſion the whole iſland from his progenitor, a man of wide poſſeſſions and rapacious power; of whom it was reported, that he had obtained his great wealth and extenſive poſſeſſions by fraud and fratricide, his elder brother, a noble of Morocco, and related to the throne, having been murdered

murdered by his order, and buried in ſome vault or ſecret repoſitory of the caſtle. Whatever was the truth of this report, the poſſeſſion never gave him happineſs though it gave him wealth; he was himſelf killed in battle ſoon after, and when it lineally deſcended to the next branch of the family, he never reſided there, nor eſtabliſhed any houſehold. This circumſtance gave riſe to a ſuſpicion that the caſtle and iſland were haunted by the ſpirit of the murdered lord; and many, whoſe affected bravery permitted them to try to live there, were driven from the place by noiſes and ſights, (if not dreadful and unholy in themſelves) rendered ſo by their fears and imaginations. This report ſpreading round the country, detered others from venturing on the grounds, which were now

now known by the appellation of "The Haunted Iſland;" ſince which the whole had lapſed into the eſtate of the crown, and been ſuffered to ſink into ruin and decay.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

THE HISTORY OF ALCOVAN.

IN a ſhort time the labourers and artificers had finiſhed their work of repair and decoration, and Selim brought with him the fair Elmira to view the preparations that were made for her ſon's ſecluſion. On entering the place the Emperor's thoughts naturally recurred to the ſpectre, whether real or imaginary, that had croſſed him on his firſt viſit—The report of the habitation's being haunted, he had never heard; nor did any one care to inform him of a circumſtance that would have excited his ridicule, if not his contempt.

Having

Having viewed the improvements and repairs, they returned to give orders for their ſon's departure, and all neceſſary preparations to be made for his immediate ſequeſtration.

He had provided a man of deep learning and ſilent penetration for his preceptor, on whoſe ſecreſy and judgment he thought he could depend—a man ſoured with the world by the exceſſes of his own youth—for we are not ſoured by the follies of others, ſo much as by the inconveniences we experience from the conſequences of thoſe committed by ourſelves—He had therefore withdrawn himſelf from the world, when he could no longer enjoy its pleaſures, and becoming moroſe from diſappointment, he employed his time in cenſuring that pleaſure which he had

had purſued through a miſtaken channel, and of which his ideas had been erroneouſly and fallaciouſly founded.

But the effects produced by the fruſtration of a too ſanguine expectancy, however pungent and corroſive in their firſt attacks on the heart, may however be meliorated by the exertions of wiſdom, if not obliterated by a rational and ſerious application to ſtudy and reflection.

Alcovan (the perſon alluded to) had felt the truth of this obſervation. —He had gained amid the riotings of his youth, a competent and extenſive knowledge of mankind. His mind had ever been prone to enquiry; and the knowledge of the human heart, the firſt and moſt abſtruſe

ſtruſe knowledge in nature, now became his prime and favourite reſearch. He forgot, for a time, the diſappointments of the world, or what is equally uſeful, he forbore thinking on them; and having applied his mind to mathematics, he made himſelf maſter of every branch of that extenſive ſcience.

He learnt the extent and uſe of numbers, and loſt his mind in unwearied and abſtruſe calculation. He bounded not his enquiries, however, by the mixed knowledge of the menſuration of material and tangible ſubſtances; but correctly computed, through the vaſt expanſe of the heavens, the motions of planets, and the diſtances of the ſtars and conſtellations—By theſe means he furniſhed his mind with a rich ſtore of aſtronomical

nomical knowledge; and having previouſly received a liberal education, as far as reſpected letters and languages, it enabled him to converſe and correſpond with the learned men of different countries that he viſited, and to imbibe from ſuch an intercourſe, a large ſtock of foreign knowledge, and of natural and experimental philoſophy.

But we have ſeen the learned ſide only of Alcovan's character—he was dark and ſubtle within.

His mind was ſubtle by imitation, for imitation is often in itſelf the offspring of ſubtlety. Virtuous indeed by the precepts of the ſchoolmen, but vicious by their examples, which he had followed. "For," ſaid he, "theſe men preach virtue, but

but they practiſe vice—their doctrines cannot be true; if they are, why do not themſelves believe and practiſe what they preach?"

Nor did the great wiſdom he had acquired, nor the elaborate ſciences of which he was a maſter, tend in any degree to ſoften the natural harſhneſs of his diſpoſition; but only added a firmer degree of auſterity to the natural majeſty of his deportment.

Such then was Alcovan, the man to whom the Emperor of Morocco had entruſted the education of his ſon.

A man of ſtrong natural abilities, and a richly cultivated underſtanding —fond of retirement—ſkilled in mathematics,

mathematics, theology, hiſtory, and languages—moreover, well informed in phyſics, and ably calculated for diſputation, or to inſtruct in the theories of ethiology, and the grand ſyſtem of the materia medica.

With ſuch an ample fund of knowledge, he was willing to ſeclude himſelf from mankind; for he had learned from them all that could be learnt from beings leſs wiſe than himſelf; and being now in the fifty-ſixth year of his age, he thought the king's propoſal of accompanying his ſon into ſolitude for twenty years, would, if he lived ſo long, give the world ſome time to overtake him in wiſdom; and poſſibly, on his return, to teach him ſomething which he did not know before.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

THE ARRIVAL OF THE CREOLE AT THE ISLAND.

"ALCOVAN," ſaid the Emperor, "into thy hands do I commit this ſacred charge. Remember, on his welfare depends thy life. I will leave him with thee, and thou wilt find every thing neceſſary for thy exiſtence and for his: Thrice in every moon, my meſſengers will await thee at the outer gate, which no one but myſelf can open—but I have contrived means for thy aſſiſtance—look to my ſon, rear him in the thoughts of virtue, but let nature

be his guide—teach him of no power above, nor let him know the name of Alla. Thus by trying the force of nature, I ſhall learn wiſdom without degrading his omnipotence, and thus ſerve mankind without injuring his precepts. Do this—nor let him know the world is larger than he ſees; or that there is ought beyond, where human life ſubſiſts or evil can reſide —his nurſe ſhall ſtay with thee a few moons longer, then will the care and charge of him devolve wholly upon thee;—ſee that his mind, in twenty years, be found as pure, although enriched with all and every knowledge, as it is now, while wrapped in ſenſeleſs ignorance:—let me not find one blemiſh in his heart, or ever have reaſon to ſuſpect, but every virtue has a dwelling there.

"Let

"Let him be called Narconah, and teach him to believe he has no friend but thee."

Saying theſe words, with a mixture of firmneſs and emotion, he delivered the child into the hands of Alcovan; who bowing in ſubmiſſion, preſſed it to his boſom.

The nurſe who accompanied him, and Alcovan, then entered the caſtle; and Selim, with Elmira drowned in tears, and his ſmall retinue, retired, and faſt locked and barred the gate.

"It is done," exclaimed Alcovan, "the great work of royal folly is accompliſhed; in twenty years, this infant muſt never ſee one human being but myſelf—I am forbid to tell

him there is a quality called vice, or even that there is a world beyond the one he ſees around him.

" Amazing folly!—to ſuppoſe a mind, learning what he muſt learn, will reſt contented in theſe narrow bounds of ignorance, and think the ſun and moon, and planets, were all made alone for us.

" But wherefore do I thus exclaim?—

" It is to be, and I in ſolitude may live in peace. Some years at leaſt muſt paſs before my care begins; and if I then ſhall find that taſk too irkſome to be borne, the chain can eaſily be broken that binds me to my exile from mankind."

CHAP. V.

IN WHICH ALCOVAN REFLECTS.

ALCOVAN's firſt care was to examine the library of which Selim had given him the key.

He found books in all languages, and many, choſen from the royal collection, which he had never ſeen; theſe however were ſoon run over, and he found himſelf no wiſer than before.

This gave him much diſſatisfaction, as he had entertained hopes of ſome rational hours of amuſement from them.

"I find," ſaid he, cloſing a book, "I find that man may know too much. He who has attained a certain heighth in wiſdom and philoſophy, loſes his reliſh for them, by finding they are incapable of ſatisfying a ſtill greater curioſity. It is like a man who exhauſts his whole riches in erecting a ſtately palace, and has, when it is completed, no wealth remaining to ſupport it.

"It may be aſked, indeed, why being wiſer than others, I am not contented with the ſtock of knowledge I have acquired? But the miſer who has collected a heap of wealth, thirſts daily to encreaſe it, though it renders him no ſervice, but the pleaſure of thinking he has, or ſoon ſhall have, more than other men."

Theſe

Theſe conſiderations naturally induced him to reflect of the plan of life he ſhould purſue.

" And yet," continued he, " it is ſtrange that a rational and thinking being, who is ready to complain of the ſhort duration and ſpeedy lapſe of time, ſhould live to look forward twenty years, and doubt the inward powers of his own mind to furniſh a ſource of employment and amuſement.

" But ſo it is—and I begin to doubt whether philoſophy is any longer valuable, than as it excites virtue, or diffuſes good, without the ſelfiſh enjoyment of ſecret obſervation, or the oſtentatious diſplay of wiſdom and ſuperior ſcience."

Had he thought on this truth ſooner he had been more happy.—As the die however was now caſt, he had too much firmneſs to recede, and therefore reſolved to go on—ſenſible that all climes and all ſituations are alike furniſhed with the ſeeds of happineſs, when contentment and reſignation ſhall have rendered them at leaſt agreeable, if not delightful, by the influence of habit.

The days now paſſed peaceably with him, for he had in ſome meaſure reconciled his philoſophy and his heart. His mind having framed itſelf into a ſyſtem of a ſcientific diſquiſition on its own powers—he began by forming an abſtract, in writing, of its whole ſtock of information, and commenced his compendium

dium by the inſertion of the following dogma:—

"This world is a barren and unending wilderneſs, ſince friends can ſcarce ever be met with; and without a friend, man is as the beaſt of the field, that wanders through the deſert, ſhunning and ſhunned alike by all, becauſe in friendſhip and intercourſe with none."

Some time after, he qualified this ſentence thus:—

"I have thought and written erroneouſly—for man has intercourſe with his own mind, or what is ſo called, which is that immortal and immaterial part of him—the ſoul; and he may, if he will, make that mind his friend and his aſſociate."

Many weeks had elapſed, before he had brought himſelf, by reaſoning, into a ſtate of perfect quietude.

In the mean time the young Narconah grew, and the time appointed for the nurſe's departure was approaching.

The meſſengers of Selim attended regularly, and Alcovan met them at the gate.

He had not yet found ſufficient leiſure to examine the Caſtle—but being now at eaſe, it occurred to him to ſearch, in hopes of finding ſomething that might lead to information, or furniſh him with amuſement.

He began therefore in the right wing, that which had been prepared for

for them; he found, as are found elſewhere, rich rooms and fine tapeſtry, recording the deeds of the prophet; ſpacious galleries, and large halls, hung with trophies: and returned diſappointed, if not diſguſted, to his apartment.

In his way back, through the principal gallery, he was ruminating on the fallacy of human wiſhes, and the vanity of ſanguine expectation, when his attention was rouſed by a rattling as if of keys and chains; and preſently, in a room to his right, by the ſudden clapping-to of a door, which echoed, with great and encreaſing force, along the galleries and paſſages.

At firſt he thought that apartment might lead to the ſame in which the

nurſe and child were ſituated—but recollecting they were to the left, he knew not how to account for this phænomenon.—Not wanting for manly firmneſs, he reſolutely advanced, and finding the opening of the door oppoſed on the other ſide, he ſtept ſome paces back.

On a ſecond effort, however, he found he was only oppoſed by ſome natural and trifling cauſe, and entered the apartment.

He found ſeveral doors in it; ſome of which he opened, and perceiving they led to other rooms, and finding no one near him, nor knowing which way to take, he returned in ſilence and rumination to his own apartment.

CHAP.

CHAP VI.

REFLECTIONS ON SOLITUDE.

THE day appointed for the departure of the nurſe was now arrived, and Alcovan bade her farewell, and heard Selim lock the outer gate; for he had journeyed thither himſelf, being ſcrupulous of truſting any one with the key.

Alcovan, on his return, looked around him; "I am now," thought he, "a ſolitary being—ſecluded from every intercourſe with man, and dependent on myſelf alone for happineſs or miſery.

"Theſe

" Theſe are however alone to be eſtimated by the bleſſings conferred on others; ſince it is by compariſon of the benefits which others enjoy that we form our notions of good or ill.

" In my retirement, I ſhall have leiſure to ſtudy mankind, though deprived of the converſe of man; for every one who can read his own heart may find ample ſubject for obſervation and reflection.

" Many moons will not paſs before the charge of education will begin—and though the firſt leſſons of inſtruction are alike irkſome to the tutor and the pupil, I ſhall ſow the ſeeds of ſenſe and virtue, and derive knowledge and inſtruction, as I watch with pleaſure the unfoldings of

of thought, from the dawnings of reaſon and imagination, in a young and uncorrupted mind."

Such were the reflections which employed the mind of Alcovan—he became placid and ſerene, and his ſerenity was the offspring of inward peace.

Silence and ſolitude, though at firſt irkſome, from their novelty, ſoon became habitual, and inſtead of being oppreſſed by tedium, he was ſoothed by tranquillity.

Alcovan had a pleaſing turn to poetry, and though his attention to the young Prince was very ſtrict, he found time and opportunity to think and write.

One

One night, when the moon ſhone with full and ſplendid luſtre—leaving the child aſleep in his bed—he walked out into the iſland, and enjoying the beautiful and ſerene proſpect around him, he lay down on the graſs, and wrote with a pencil on his tablet the following ode:

Save when I move, no noiſe diſturbs the night,
For ſilence holds her whiſpering ſynod here;
All nature, reſting with departing light,
Sends no rude ſound to meet the liſt'ning ear.

Save what to ſilence, is the next degree,
The diſtant murmur of a tinkling rill;
Or ſome ſoft wind that fans the leafy tree,
Or bruſhes lightly o'er the furze-grown hill.

No birds are chirping now among the woods,
To lull their little offspring in the neſt;
Nor ſcarce the murmur of the diſtant floods
Is heard, to ſoothe the ſenſes into reſt.

Yon

Yon pale bright orb, may call reflection home,
And bid tumultuous care and paſſion ceaſe,
Where chance ſome beings, like ourſelves may roam,
Or long departed ſpirits reſt in peace.

Delightful thought! to Hope when wearied life
Has run on earth its long and painful race,
In thee! forgetful of this world of ſtrife,
The ſoul may find a peaceful reſting place.

The ſilent ſadneſs of the child of grief,
Shall find thy placid beauties peace impart;
The ſecret tear with thee ſhall find relief,
And ſighs that iſſue from the broken heart.

E'en laughing Folly, bent to thy controul,
Shall pauſe unconſcious of the ſecret charm;
Thy hidden impulſe, ſtealing on his ſoul,
Shall give returning ſenſe the firſt alarm.

Queen of ſerenity, and ſilent ſhade,
If e'er in thee departed ſouls exiſt,
Let me, tranſlated to thy realms, be made
One of thoſe happy—in thy regions bleſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

THE SUPERNATURAL DISAPPEARANCE OF THE PRINCE.

IT was paſt midnight when Alcovan returned to the caſtle—he went ſtraight to his apartment, and thinking the child aſleep, unrobed himſelf to go to reſt. When he had lain ſome minutes however, it occurred to him to get up and look into the couch where the Creole lay, and which was cloſe by his own, thinking that during his abſence ſomething might have happened to him; for he was unaccuſtomed to find him

ſo

ſo ſilent, as he generally awoke upon the ſlighteſt noiſe.

It can ſcarce be conceived how great was his aſtoniſhment when he miſſed the child; he could hardly believe he had left the chamber alone and without aſſiſtance; and yet he knew not what elſe to ſuppoſe.

He therefore ſearched diligently over the apartment, and not finding him, in great trepidation of mind threw his gown over him, and taking up the lamp, hurried up and down the Caſtle, calling him by name, and ſearching every corner as he flew, where he might poſſibly have ſecreted himſelf. Not finding him any where, his agitation became violent, he ſtamped the ground, raved like one

one diſtracted, and was abandoning himſelf to the moſt violent emotions of grief, when, at the end of the hall where he then was, he ſaw a ſudden flaſh of light, and a moment after heard a confuſed and diſtant noiſe, like the rattling of low thunder. Horror, for a moment, ſuſpended his faculties, and he ſtood motionleſs on the ſpot—finding, however, the light had vaniſhed, and the noiſe had ceaſed, he returned, with caution and ſilence to his chamber, his mind agitated by a jumbled chaos of conceptions; yet, when momentary reflection preſented itſelf, hoping that the Prince might ſtill be found there —he threw himſelf on his couch in an agony of deſpair. The appearance to which he had been a witneſs, ſerved by no means to leſſen the apprehenſions

prehenſions he had formed, from the extraordinary and ſudden departure of the Prince.

If he had no abſolute belief in ſupernatural agency, he at leaſt credited the poſſibility of an intercourſe between mortals and ſuperior beings; nor did he totally diſbelieve, that evil ſpirits were ſometimes permitted to interfere in the concerns and actions of humanity.

The former ſurprize he had met with in the great gallery, helped to encourage therefore a ſuſpicion, and he trembled at the ſame moment in which it preſented itſelf to his mind.

Alcovan had never heard the ſtory which was in repute round the country; for thoſe who converſed with him,

him, previous to his retirement, dared not to offend his dignity, by expoſing what he would then have called the weakneſs of their own imaginations, or to call in queſtion his philoſophy, by ſuppoſing him open to common fears and vulgar apprehenſions like other men.

Had he heard it, it had been natural for him now to ſuppoſe there was ſome truth in the report, that the Iſland and Caſtle were haunted; for it was even now a reflection which poſſeſſed his mind, although previouſly unprepared to receive ſuch an impreſſion.

It has been urged, that ſuperſtition is the offspring of weak minds only, operating on ignorance and preſumption.

But

But we have ſeen inſtances where ſtrong minds, even at that time of life when reaſon has moſt force, and the operations of the mind are in fulleſt vigour, have received the firſt impreſſions of this ſuperſtition, which is called weakneſs; but which has been proved, in many inſtances, to be rather the reſult of too deep reflection and metaphyſical diſquiſition, than the emanation of folly, or the paucity of ideas in an erroneous or miſguided conception.

Alcovan hitherto had never entered into any ſpeculative enquiry on the ſubject of ſupernatural agencies, and therefore now plunged with more precipitancy than judgment into the ſubject, and with leſs caution than he had been inclined to do, had not his mind been charged with the

the preſent importance of the queſtion.

Oppreſt, however, with the extraordinary event now upon his mind, with a firm and decided opinion, he leant to an abſolute and unreſtrained belief.

This ſpecies of ſuperſtition having once rooted itſelf in his mind, it opened a new field of enquiry to his ideas.

It was a kind of terror, totally unconnected with religious ſuperſtition, which rather betrays a ridiculous extreme on one ſide, than an equally weak deficiency on the other —but bore a greater affinity to that common credulity, which we ſometimes imbibe in our infancy, and never

never loſe ſight of to the moſt extended period of advanced age.

Theſe ſenſations added to the gloomy apprehenſions that oppreſſed him, when his memory recurred to the diſappearance of the young Prince, and the dread of what puniſhment and ſhame would await his ſuppoſed neglect, if not his poſitive guilt.

Thus agitated and thus depreſſed, it was noon before he had reſolution to begin a diligent ſearch over the iſland.

CHAP. VIII.

THE FRUITS OF ALCOVAN'S SEARCH.

ON examining the Caſtle, Alcovan found a very ſmall part of it had been furniſhed by the Emperor, and that the principal portion of the building, including one entire wing, was much fallen to decay, and was ſecured from all reſearch by double bolts and bars on either ſide.

This at another time had excited his curioſity, but he had now a ſtronger hold upon his attention. He therefore hurried through all the apartments

apartments to which he had acceſs, calling the Creole by name, and at the ſame time liſtening to every ideal noiſe, and watching at every ſuppoſed motion.

In certain diſpoſitions of mind, extreme ſilence is as likely to terrify as almoſt the very appearance of danger itſelf; and Alcovan being himſelf in that ſtate of mind, heard the echo of his own voice, and ſtarted at the awful and unexpected ſilence that enſued.

This ſilence became every moment more profound, and every moment to him more awful. Any ſound would then have been welcome to his ear, though he dreaded the firſt approaches of it.

As he advanced he caſt his eyes often behind him, as if ſuſpecting ſome one followed his ſteps; and ſtopped ſhort at every turning, without knowing why, as though he ſuppoſed ſome one was there, ready to preſent a poniard to his breaſt.

To ſuch a degree of weakneſs can terror, when it once ſeizes the mind, reduce the ſtrongeſt intellect. And to ſuch a ſtate of infant imbecillity had anxiety, united with terror, reduced the firm mind of this deep philoſopher.

Having wandered from chamber to chamber, ſtill in doubt and ſtill in apprehenſion, and having retraced the ſame walk over and over, through a long train of apartments, he at length deſpaired of finding the object

of

of his ſearch in the caſtle, and reſolved not to reſt till he had traverſed the whole iſland.

The day was far ſpent and the cool breeze of the evening blew freſh among the trees, when he left the Caſtle, heedleſs which way he directed his ſteps, nor knowing whither he could direct them.

Although the young Creole could ſcarcely walk, it never preſented itſelf to Alcovan's mind how abſurd was his preſent ſearch, ſince it was impoſſible the Prince could have left the Caſtle by himſelf, the outer gate being cloſed with heavy bars, the remains of former ſecurity, far above his reach within. So little, when the mind is greatly agitated by misfortune, can we reflect on the moſt pro-

bable means of vanquiſhing the evil; and ſo ill prepared are we to meet it, that the very exertions we make to oppoſe, ſometimes tend rather to increaſe than diminiſh our diſtreſs.

Alcovan now wearied himſelf with ineffectual ſearch, he hurried through the ſhrubberies and incloſures, and as the ſun began to ſink beneath the walls, his agitation increaſed with his fatigue; and the ſerene beauties around him, which he had often ſurveyed with the enraptured eye of enthuſiaſm, now loſt their charms, and aſſumed the appearance of gloomy and awful ſolemnity.

Night now ſhut in, and he had ſcarce traverſed half the Iſland; his ſpirits were ſunk into dejection by exertion, and his body into languor by

by fatigue; his legs tottered beneath him, and unable to proceed, he ſunk to the ground, and forgot, in a tranſient ſuſpenſion of his faculties, the gloom which ſurrounded him without, and the horrors which tormented him within. But he awoke to freſh terror; for a ſhort ceſſation of ſorrow is but a ſtimulus to ſtronger grief; as a ſkilful general gains a ſhort reſpite for his army, to invigorate their ſpirits for a ſubſequent and more deſperate attack. The body may be recruited after labour by the refreſhing balm of reſt; but the mind, fatigued and haraſſed, knows no ſuch aſſiſtant.

Alcovan's philoſophy could not now ſupport him; yet did he poſſeſs every advantage that can be derived from it. He was of deep learning and deep reflection, and becauſe he

roſe above them, regarded with indifference or contempt the little misfortunes incidental to human life. But though he was a rigid and ſtern moral philoſopher, he could not bear up againſt more ſerious evils. He wanted that rational and more exalted reſource to fly to for happineſs and dependence, which can alone ſupply the mind with fortitude, and to which no power can operate with equal force.

Religion, however lightly treated by ſome, and little thought of by others, is this ſtable and ſubſtantial prop on which ſo many rely, and which has been ſo often found the ſupport and confidence of calamity, when every other aſſiſtance has proved inadequate.

Alcovan's

Alcovan's philoſophy therefore having now forſaken him, he had no reſource to fly to, and he roſe from the earth in the anguiſh of deſperation, heedleſs whither he directed his ſteps, and rolling his eyes in wild horror on the ſcene around him; for a ſenſation ſomewhat reſembling fear now poſſeſſed his mind, the moon having ſunk behind a thick veil of clouds, and the dark appearance of the heavens indicating an approaching ſtorm.

CHAP. IX.

ALCOVAN RETURNS TO THE CASTLE, STILL MORE ANXIOUS THAN HE SET OUT.

THE thunder now rolled with awful and tremendous claps through the heavens, and the repeated flaſhes of forked lightning, which ſeemed to rend the ſkies, ſtruck terror to the heart of Alcovan, and rouſed him from the ſenſeleſs torpor in which his faculties were wrapped.

Calling to mind his ſituation, and recollecting how fruitleſs hitherto had been his ſearch, he penetrated ſtill deeper into the woods, which ſheltered him for a time from the rain, which now began to deſcend in

in torrents, and where he at length found ſhelter in a piece of ruins, into which he crept, and from whence he conſidered the fury of the ſtorm with more tranquillity, as he now thought he had no danger to apprehend from its effects.

In this place he paſt the remainder of the night, generally employed in conſidering the ſtrange diſappearance of the young Prince Narconah—though frequently rouſed to obſervation on the fury of the ſtorm, which laſted with unabating violence till the morning, when the atmoſphere diſcharged of its ſulphureous vapours aſſumed the appearance of a calm, and the ſun aroſe on the eaſtern hemiſphere with ſplendour and magnificence, and brought freſhneſs and fertility to the plains of Morocco.

Alcovan now hurried over the whole iſland, and ſearched every corner of it with the moſt diligent ſcrutiny. Vain however was his ſearch, and fruitleſs were his exertions; and he again ſaw the evening begin to veil the ſky, as he returned dejected and depreſſed to the great gate of the caſtle. As he entered, he turned back, and ſhuddered at the reflections that darted into his mind. Advancing, he liſtened with doubtful attention, and looked cautiouſly around, leſt an unknown being, ſuch as he ſuſpected to inhabit there, ſhould ſuddenly harm him, or, without preparation for its appearance, ſurpriſe him with an awful and tremendous preſence. All, however, was profoundly ſilent, till as he thus advanced, with fearful circumſpection, his attention was arreſted by a ſudden cry, which

ſeemed

ſcemed to iſſue from a remote apartment in the Caſtle.

All the apprehenſions he had formed, and all the horrors that the ſuppoſed preſence of an injured ſpirit, or ſuperior being, had excited in his mind, now ruſhed at once on his recollection, and he became torpid with aſtoniſhment and fear. Collecting together, however, all his fortitude, he recovered ſufficient courage to advance, and hearing the cry repeated, he advanced towards that part whence it appeared to proceed. As he went forward, a ſudden thought ruſhed into his mind, that probably the voice he heard was that of Narconah, and therefore, puſhing forward with more ſpeed and leſs apprehenſion, he ſoon reached

ed the chamber from which he plainly perceived the voice to iſſue.

Being at length arrived at the door, he heſitated for ſome moments whether or no he ſhould enter; and having liſtened for ſome ſeconds, and not hearing at that time any noiſe, he ventured to open the door, far enough to admit his head. It being now nearly dark, he could perceive nothing, but that the chamber was large, and that it was one he had never before ſeen; but finding all ſtill and ſilent, he entered, and entering perceived in a corner, lying on a couch, the form of a ſleeping child, which he inſtantly flew to, and in a mixed agony of joy, ſurpriſe, and emotion, preſſed the young Creole to his boſom.

Having

Having thus happily, though fortuitouſly recovered the Prince, he hurried back through theſe dreary apartments, nor ever ſtopped till he arrived at his own chamber, where, half diſtracted, he laid the Prince on his bed, and having bolted and barred the doors, to enſure future ſecurity, he prepared ſomething, though ſcarcely knowing what he did, for the refreſhment of himſelf and the Prince. But as his joy now exceeded if poſſible his former grief, the ſudden tranſition from one extreme to the other ſo far exhauſted him, that without taſting refreſhment himſelf, he placed the Prince on his couch, and falling on his own, overcome with fatigue, he ſunk into forgetfulneſs and a deep ſleep.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

ALCOVAN'S FIRST PLANS OF EDUCATION.

IN his diſturbed ſlumbers he dreamt of the diſtreſſes he had experienced in the preceding day, and ſaw, in his ideas, a ſpirit paſſing before him; he awoke, rouſed himſelf, perceived he had only dreamt, and again compoſed himſelf to reſt.

During the night he awoke often, and ſtarted up to ſee if the Prince was ſafe.

In the morning he roſe with tranquillity, and formed a reſolution never more to truſt Narconah from his ſight.

ſight. This reſolution he ſtrictly kept for a conſiderable time.

In the meantime the Prince grew apace, and eſcaped during infancy, from the care of Alcovan, many of thoſe maladies to which children are liable.

His preceptor allowed him only the moſt homely fare, of which himſelf partook; for he maintained as a regular maxim—that luxury was not only injurious to health, but was apt, when encouraged in childhood, to lay a too ſtrong hold upon the heart.

Luxury is alike the bane of ſocial compact and of private virtue, it poiſons the mind and alienates the heart from the firſt, and withdraws the

the affections from the latter, while it ſubjugates both to effeminacy and vice.

The days and years which paſſed imperceptibly over their heads, marked a perpetual progreſs of improvement; and every moon, as it revolved, ſaw new beauties and new ideas dawning in the mind of the young Creole.

A ſprightly fancy and an animated imagination, were the leading characteriſtics of his boyiſh years, and an inſatiate ſpirit of enquiry, which he always poſſeſſed, rendered him ſenſible and intelligent long before the age that ſenſe and intelligence are expected to appear in youth.

Alcovan never checked the riſing genius which he foreſaw, but cultivated with pains and judgment every right propenſity, and turned with a wiſe and deliberate hand every young ſhoot in his diſpoſition, which, if permitted to branch out, might have rooted itſelf too deeply, and in the end perhaps have become the ſource and fountain of evil.

He entered into all the childiſh plays and tricks of Narconah, and, by a nice diſcrimination, became his familiar aſſociate, without looſing thoſe reins of authority which are found neceſſary for the regulation of inſtruction; and while he endeavoured to avoid a premature wiſdom, as a much greater evil than benefit in youth, he took good care to keep alive in his mind a perpetual thirſt for

for knowledge, which induced him to look forward to inſtruction as the ſource of information, and to wiſdom as the cauſe of felicity.

He did not confine his ideas of inſtruction and wiſdom to the narrow bounds of ſcience and language, but inſtilled into his young and ſuſceptible mind the neceſſity of acquiring habits of ſelf government; the trueſt and beſt acceptation of the word wiſdom.

In the morning he conſtantly aroſe with the ſun, and inſtructed his young pupil in ſuch exerciſes as tended to render his mind firm and manly, and his body healthy and athletic. By light and ſhort exerciſes of learning, he kept alive a conſtant wiſh of improvement, for a love of knowledge

knowledge is not to be enforced by the labour of tuition, as tedious inſtruction weakens the intellect it is meant to ſtrengthen, without producing the deſired effects upon the mind; but is rather to be inſtilled by cautious gradations, holding the mind in perpetual ſuſpenſe, by conſtantly exciting curioſity.

The young Narconah, however, cauſed little trouble to his preceptor, he had a mind of the moſt reſtleſs activity, which ſprung with the greateſt agility to every leſſon of wiſdom which Alcovan prepared for him, and which was alone quiet when liſtening to the voice of inſtruction.

As he grew older the cares of Alcovan became greater, though the trouble of education became leſs. He

He perceived an enterprizing and daring ſpirit begin to ſhew itſelf in Narconah's diſpoſition, and it now became his great care to direct that ſpirit to ſuch objects as were ſuitable to the qualities and occupations of a prince.

One day as they were ſtrolling through the iſland, and the Creole was enquiring the various qualities and uſes of the different ſhrubs and herbs they met with, they imperceptibly reached the great wall which encircled the iſland. Alcovan had walked on before Narconah, and having ſtrayed ſome time, and miſſing his companion, he turned back to ſeek him; at firſt he was ſomewhat alarmed at not ſeeing him, but having returned a few paces, he perceived he was buſily engaged in

in examining the wall, and regarding its heigth and regularity with aſtoniſhment and curioſity.

Alcovan having preſently reached him, found ſome difficulty in diſengaging his thoughts from the object upon which they now appeared ſo deeply intereſted.

Narconah had juſt arrived at the age of fifteen: He had often ſurveyed the woods around him with an eager curioſity, and wondered if this barrier bounded the circumference of the univerſe.

Alcovan had purpoſely avoided anſwering this queſtion, which Narconah had frequently urged; and had hitherto kept his diſciple from entering thoſe woods, which he had now

ſuffered

ſuffered him to enter rather from forgetfulneſs than intention.

In order to keep him in ignorance reſpecting this material point, on which he had received ſuch particular injunctions from the Emperor, he had cautiouſly kept from his ſight any books and papers that might have rendered him information, or excited in his breaſt a ſtill greater degree of curioſity on the ſubject.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE.

"FATHER," ſaid Narconah, "I have read of the works of nature, and of the labours of art—but can ſcarce comprehend wherein lies the difference between theſe terms; ſince nature, as we here ſee, may be beautified by art; and ſince art can produce no effect worthy of obſervation without the aſſiſtance of nature."

"The works of nature," replied Alcovan, "are ſuch as you ſee around you. This wall, which has ſo much engaged your attention, is a labour of art."

"And have you erected this great maſs of ſtone?" ſaid Narconah.

"This wall," replied Alcovan, "has remained near two centuries, and was built by thoſe who formerly inhabited here—for there have been beings like ourſelves, for ages and ages before we exiſted, ever ſince the creation of the world."

"You confuſe and aſtoniſh me ſo much," exclaimed the Prince, "that I am quite loſt in perplexity—I cannot comprehend you. But wherein lies the neceſſity for ſuch a ſtructure? Is it placed here as a fence againſt wild beaſts of prey?—If ſo, what new world do they inhabit; what kind of land do they live in; and how far beyond this wall does the ſyſtem of creation extend?"

"That

"That is a queſtion," anſwered the preceptor, "to which I can make no anſwer. What exiſts beyond that we ſee, I know not; poſſibly a rude and uncultivated waſte, or perhaps a populated wild, inhabited by beings whom we are altogether happy in remaining unacquainted with; by ſavages who build cities, and hold intercourſe with others, under the form of civilization, and yet live but by war and the deſtruction of one another."

"It is not poſſible," interrupted Narconah, vehemently—"I ſay it is not poſſible ſuch ſavages can exiſt?"

"I do not poſitively ſay they do;" replied Alcovan, "perhaps this wall may be the boundary of creation."

"That cannot be neither," anſwered Narconah, "for yonder ſtream muſt have ſome ſource, though I know not whence it may come, nor whither it wanders; but of this I am certain, that it riſes from ſome ſpring beyond this wall, and loſes not itſelf within the confines of the ſpace around us. I am anxious to know the truth—ſurely we might find means to make a paſſage through this wall."

Alcovan ſtarted at the ſuggeſtion of Narconah, and trembled leſt he ſhould attempt to put it into execution. He therefore broke off the converſation as ſpeedily as poſſible, and uſed every artifice to draw his pupil's mind from the ſubject which now engroſſed it; though he found the taſk was vain, and that it was even with

with the greateſt difficulty he was able to withdraw him from the ſpot.

As they returned home the evening cloſed in upon them. Narconah paſt on in a profound ſilence, which Alcovan endeavoured to interrupt, by diverting his thoughts from the object which now ſeemed wholly to occupy them. The young Prince, however, was not ſo eaſily to be diverted.

His mind had conceived ſomething, he knew not what, which wholly poſſeſſed him, and which with the tumults of expectation, and the flutterings of hope, abſorbed his thoughts and bewildered his intellects in a confuſed labyrinth and perplexity of ideas.

In this diſpoſition he returned to the Caſtle. Alcovan made ſeveral attempts to inveigle him into converſation without effect. The young Prince placed himſelf in a window of their chamber, from whence he viewed with a fixed attention the apparent motion of the moon and planets, and conſidered how improbable it was, that theſe innumerable celeſtial lamps ſhould have been placed there by the hand of nature, merely to illumine the ſmall tract of earth which he ſaw around him.

It was with great difficulty he could be perſuaded to retire to his couch, on which he at length flung himſelf, though without any hopes of repoſe. Nature, however, at length exhauſted, ſunk into reſt, and he awoke not till the morning dawn beamed

beamed full upon his face, and recalled to his recollection the tranſactions and reflections of the preceding day.

Alcovan was up before him, for the anxiety of his mind had kept him waking, and ſome obſervations which had fallen from Narconah, had determined him to enter with him immediately into the ſcience of aſtronomy, which had hitherto been neglected; by this means endeavouring to divert his mind from the dangerous conſequences ſo often attributed to a too minute and uninſtructed enquiry into the PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE.

CHAP. XII.

THE CREOLE BECOMES PENSIVE AND MELANCHOLY.

THE attention of the Creole was now occupied for ſome time by the inſtructions of Alcovan, which he ſought after with avidity. This, however, did not prevent his making a minute ſearch round the iſland.

He ſet out one morning, unobſerved by Alcovan, and having for a great length of time wandered round the iſland, cloſe to the great wall that ſurrounded it, without meeting with any appearance that gave him an opening for hope; he at length came to that little door which

which we have before deſcribed, and to this ſpot his attention now became rivetted. After muſing ſome time, he recollected that his abſence might breed ſuſpicion, and therefore turned back haſtily towards the Caſtle. In a ſhort time, however, his pace ſlackened, and he again turned towards the door, in agitation and dejection. Calling together all his reſolution, he at length entered the porch of his priſon.

He then retired to his chamber, where Alcovan was ſearching for him. This diſcerning man, who ſaw ſomething momentous working in Narconah's mind, uſed every effort his wiſdom could ſuggeſt to allure him into a ſtate of quietude, and to draw from his breaſt the ſecret cauſe of his uneaſineſs, which he plainly

perceived was poiſoning his health and corroding his diſpoſition; for grief and melancholy, when concealed in the heart, prey upon the ſenſe that gives them their exiſtence; but when divulged to friendſhip and fidelity, loſe half their force in the conſolations of ſympathy, and the reaſonings of philoſophy. But Narconah ſcarce knew himſelf the cauſe of his uneaſineſs. It was a diſtreſſing ſenſation, new to his mind, combining hope, fear, anxiety, and doubt — without knowing to what diſtance thoſe paſſions extended, or to what object they were directed.

All the endeavours of Alcovan, however, proved ineffectual. The voice of inſtruction was no longer attended to, and if heard, was no longer profited by. A ſupine lan-

guor

guor and ſolitary dejection began to mark the young Prince's character. He pined in ſolitude and ſilence whenever he could eſcape from the notice of his tutor; and even the chirping of the wood-birds, formerly to him ſo enchanting, was now become inharmonious and unpleaſant.

Alcovan perceived and regretted this ſudden change, but could not remedy it, and after frequently and ineffectually ſoliciting an explanation of the cauſe of thoſe effects which he lamented, he forbore to introduce the ſubject, and obſerved in ſilence only the inward operations of Narconah's mind.

Having from time to time reviſited the wall, and finding all his attempts unavailing, and all his hopes

abortitive, Narconah gave over his purſuit for the preſent; and as the rainy ſeaſon about that time ſet in, he confined himſelf to the Caſtle, wandering to and fro the apartments, ſtill avoiding Alcovan as frequently as poſſible, and ſometimes gazing on the diſtant woods in ſilent and painful rumination.

It chanced one day, as he was thus wandering through the great gallery of the manſion, that the ſame appearance which had formerly ſtruck the Emperor his father with aſtoniſhment, and Alcovan with apprehenſion, in his turn ſurpriſed and terrified him. The form and figure of an old man, whoſe beard ſwept his boſom, and whoſe white hairs were ſparingly ſcattered on his forehead, clothed in a long white robe, paſſed

paſſed before him with a ſlow and majeſtic air—his face was wan and pale, and the lines of grief, rather than of age, ſeemed to mark the character of his mind.

Narconah was at firſt agitated with ſurpriſe, and then with fear—but it was a momentary feeling, which forſook him long before he was able to reach his apartment. This, however, he ſoon did, and diſcloſed to Alcovan, that he had ſeen another being like himſelf. He then, without waiting for any anſwer, demanded of him whence he came? Who he was? How long he had been in the world? And for what purpoſe he had viſited them? To theſe queſtions Alcovan was unable to make any reply, except by aſking if he had heard him ſpeak; for the recollection of

of an adventure which had at firſt impreſſed him with ſo much horror, and its re-appearance to the young Prince at ſo critical an age, excited emotions too ſtrong to be concealed; but which he ſtrove by every effort in his power to overcome.

Narconah being diſſatisfied with the ſilence of Alcovan, returned inſtantly to the ſpot, leaving him in a reverie, from which even his departure did not awaken him. On approaching the gallery, he found his fears return; yet was he aſhamed of the ſenſation, as he knew no cauſe of apprehenſion from any thing, and therefore ſoon reached the end of the gallery, though he proceeded with caution, leſs from apprehenſion than from curioſity.

Having

Having looked around him on all ſides, and perceiving nothing, he began to think whether he had not been in one of thoſe dreams which he had ſometimes experienced; and reflecting on this natural concluſion, he ſat for a length of time in ſilence and deep thought.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

NARCONAH COMMENCES A SEARCH AFTER THE PHANTOM.

AFTER muſing ſome time, he heard a voice in a deep and melancholy tone, ſeeming to proceed from behind the ſide tapeſtry; and applying his ear cloſely to it, diſtinctly heard theſe words:—

"Oh, Alla! thou great being whom I adore, how long muſt torment extend the period of exiſtence? How long muſt ſenſe and feeling, renewed from day to day, linger in miſery and ſolitude?"

Here

Here a pauſe ſucceeded, at the end of which a deep ſigh, which ſeemed to iſſue from a broken heart, interrupted the ſilence, and he heard no more.

Narconah liſtened ſome time in expectation of again hearing the voice, but finding all continued ſilent, ventured to remove the tapeſtry, in order to ſee if there might not poſſibly be ſome opening behind it —he found the wainſcot quite perfect, till rather by accident than deſign, he touched in his ſearch a ſmall ſpring, upon which a pannel ſufficiently large to admit of a man's entrance, flew up, and left an unobſtructed paſſage for him. He deſcended ſome ſteps, without heſitation, and when he ſet his foot upon the laſt,

laſt, by ſome ſecret ſpring the trap cloſed upon him.

All was now ſilent, and the gloom of the ſcene around him was in itſelf enough to have terrified a mind leſs firm than his, a mind affected by the conſciouſneſs of guilt, or a heart tainted by depravity or vice.

He groped his way on as well as the darkneſs would permit, till at the end of the apartment he was now in, he perceived a faint glimmering of light, towards which he directed his ſteps, with as much ſpeed as caution would admit of. Here he found a ſmall opening, ſcarce ſufficient to throw a light upon the place, in which he however perceived an altar, and the other appendages of a moſque. At this ſight he formed the idea, that

that the place was that in which the voice had uttered its prayer, and felt, he knew not why, an inward ſenſation of inſtinctive awe;—for he had imbibed devotion from reflection, and had learnt, in contemplating the wonderful works of nature, to adore the great firſt Cauſe of all thoſe wonders—the ſupreme Being, whom he knew not of; but whom he worſhipped as a ſuperintending providence, which had diſpoſed and ordered the great ſyſtem of planets around him, which gave the warmth and temperature to the air, and ſent the ſun upon his daily courſe.

After having offered up a ſhort ejaculation, he fervently beſought that power to inſtruct and lead him on his way; and roſe, refreſhed by ſerenity, and enlightened by hope.

Hence

Hence it was he conceived the voice to have iſſued which he had heard; and his next concern was—from whom or from what being that voice could have proceeded. Searching for an opening that might lead him on, he at length found a ſmall door-way, which leading down a long and winding ſtaircaſe, at length introduced him to another apartment, more ſpacious though no leſs gloomy than the moſque which he had left above him. He proceeded for ſome time to grope his way by the walls, down which the damps ran copiouſly, and from which he often found the ſuffocating vapours that aroſe exceedingly troubleſome. Paſſing through various vaults and paſſages, he at length found his way obſtructed by a door, which he was unable to force open. Having

paſſed

paſſed over a great length of ground, and finding himſelf fatigued, he ſcarce knew whether to reſt there or to endeavour to return. After having made ſeveral fruitleſs efforts to force the door, he ſat down on the ground in a ſtate of dejection and deſpondency; for recollecting how far he had proceeded already, he had began to entertain a hope that it might bring him to ſome outlet under the whole Caſtle and Iſland; and now finding that hope at once fruſtrated, he relinquiſhed every idea of finding his way back.

It now occurred to him, that Alcovan would ſhortly miſs, and moſt probably come in ſearch of him—he was therefore eaſy on that head, ſuppoſing him to know the way to theſe ſubterraneous apartments, which he had

had ſo ſtrangely diſcovered by accident.

That ſouls exiſt after death, and ſometimes appear in the form they animated during life, is a ſuppoſition which has been intuitively planted by nature in the human breaſt.—The moſt ferocious and uninſtructed ſavages have a ſimilar notion, and invariably believe in their ceremonies in honour of departed heroes, that the ſpirit of him whoſe virtues they record is inviſibly preſent, and enjoying the honours and bleſſings beſtowed on him by his countrymen.

Though Alcovan, in purſuance of the plan laid down for him, had never diſcourſed with Narconah on the ſubject of the re-appearance of departed ſpirits, yet had the latter

latter conceived ſome idea of it; and the ſame nature which had led ſavages to their belief, without any reaſoning on the ſubject, had led Narconah to believe it alſo. Such it appeared to him muſt have been the voice he heard, and though he thought of it without fear, he could not think of it without agitation.

At length fatigued and exhauſted, he ſunk into a gentle ſlumber—nor did he awake till rouſed by a loud noiſe, which he concluded to be the clapping-to of a large door, and by the rattling of keys, which was followed by the opening of that door which he had in vain eſſayed to paſs, and he immediately diſcerned, notwithſtanding the darkneſs to which his eyes were now contracted by

by habit, a figure paſſing ſlowly through the place.

At length loſing ſight of him, and finding all again ſilent, he roſe from the ground, and feeling his way to the door, found it was left open, and inſtantly perceived light in the paſſage beyond him;—thither he immediately haſtened, and the awful ſcene that preſented itſelf, induced him to turn for a moment from a ſight which ſtruck him with horror, from the novelty and ſolemnity of its appearance. The light, which, ſpeaking metaphorically, did little more than ſhew the gloom and darkneſs of the place, proceeded from a lamp in the centre, and ſhed its feeble rays a few paces only round it.

The

The place had the form and appearance of an extenſive cave, and the rugged ſides, hollowed in various receſſes, darkened the ſurface, and added freſh ſolemnity to the whole. Narconah heſitated a few moments and then proceeded; when he approached the lamp, he plainly perceived a large box beneath it, and ſurveying its lid, diſcovered a ſhining plate of braſs, on which he was enabled to decypher the following ſentences, in Mooriſh characters:—

"The bones of the murdered
MOLOC ALCANZOR BELI,
Ancient poſſeſſor of the
Iſle and Caſtle of OTHEN,
lie beneath.
ALLA! RECEIVE HIS SOUL.
Whoſoever readeth this, pray for his repoſe."

Narconah knelt, and offered up a fervent wiſh for the reſt of the departed ſpirit.

CHAP. XIV.

THE CREOLE REACHES THE OUTLET OF THE VAULTS.

NARCONAH was preparing to open the lid of the box or coffin, when he was alarmed by a noiſe in the apartments he had left behind; on this he retired to a dark part of the cave, and preſently the ſame figure paſſed through, locking the door by which he entered, and immediately proceeding with a ſlow and ſolemn ſtep towards the wall, knelt before ſomething which Narconah could not ſee, uttered a ſhort ejaculation, and then departed; but by what paſſage he could not perceive.

Narconah

Narconah liſtened for a long time after his departure, till finding all was ſilent he ventured to come forth: more anxious at the moment to ſee the contents of the box, and to diſcover the object to which the figure had knelt, than to make his eſcape from the place;—taking the lamp from the hook on which it was ſuſpended, he lifted the cover from the trunk, when he beheld the perfect ſkeleton of a human figure. This he viewed with an eye of curioſity, for he had read of anatomy. Unwilling, however, to diſturb the bones that had formerly belonged to a being like himſelf, he covered the trunk with due reverence, and turning to the right, beheld a large urn of clay, on which was the following inſcription:

"The HEART of BELI!"

Over it, on an earthen ſtand, was placed the Alcoran, which, till now, Narconah had never ſeen; though he had overheard from Alcovan, in his private devotions, ſomething of its contents—it was open in that part which treats of the reſurrection of the body, and the future ſtate of the ſoul in purgatory or in paradiſe. Narconah ſcarcely comprehended what this meant; but now ſaw to what the figure had knelt, and bowed down before it. It then again entered into his mind, that the phantom he had ſeen was the ſpirit of the murdered Moloc, who was now, poſſibly, in a ſtate of purgatory, and confined in this place as a place of reſtleſs anxiety.

After meditating ſome time on this ſubject, he began to think of his ſituation,

tion, and in what manner he might be beſt able to emancipate himſelf from his preſent apparent confinement. With this view he ſought diligently round the cave—he came to many openings in the earth, which he conceived might poſſibly be outlets beyond the walls of the iſland, whoſe height and ſtrength he had ſo often viewed as the inſurmountable barriers to his liberty and his happineſs.

After trying, and being diſappointed in ſeveral places, he knew not how to proceed; he crept through apertures into which he was obliged to crawl upon his hands and knees for a conſiderable way, and to return in the ſame manner, when he found he could proceed no further. After ſearching for a conſiderable time, he

began to deſpair of being able to free himſelf from this dreary abode, when he ſtumbled over ſomething faſtened, as he imagined, to the floor. As he fell the lamp flew out of his hand, and inſtantly expiring, left him in total darkneſs.

He had now no poſſible reſource or hope of eſcaping from the dungeon, the houſe of death in which he was at preſent immured, unleſs he could find that over which he had ſtumbled, and which he conceived might luckily be a key, or ſome weapon that would enable him to force his way back through the door he had ſeen locked, in order to return, if he could not poſſibly go forward. With this intention he ſearched all over the floor with his hands, and after ſome time laid hold of a ring, which

which pulling, anſwered to his hand, and opened a ſmall trap-door; through this it was, he ſuppoſed, the figure muſt have paſſed, as he could find no other way, and therefore did not heſitate to try if he could himſelf find a paſſage. Having deſcended a few ſteps, he ſaw a diſtant light, and making towards it, felt inexpreſſible pleaſure in perceiving that it was the light of day.

And now every other ſenſation was loſt in the joy of once more beholding the light of the ſun. Some anxiety however diſturbed his mind, in reflecting what might be the new ſituation into which he would probably be introduced, and whether he ſhould have reached beyond the walls, and what might be the circumſtances he ſhould meet with, or

the difficulties he ſhould have to encounter in the new world.

The firſt object that preſented itſelf to his view was an old hermit, ſeated in his cell; before him was a table, on which were roots and herbs, and an earthen pitcher. The old man had juſt thrown away ſome roots which he could not eat, and looked as if the ſituation of his mind had deſtroyed his appetite, and had made him too dainty to enjoy the food provided for him by nature. After muſing ſometime, and often caſting his eyes to heaven, he exclaimed, as if purſuing a train of inward thought: —"And no one to ſolace ſorrow, or to ſympathize with miſery. Alas! that comfort, with every other, is denied me, ſince my loved child, my Zelia, has forſaken me. But I can

die

die alone, and die content, ſince ſuch is the will of heaven."—He then folded his arms, as if to continue his reflections in ſilence.

Narconah ſtaid not long to obſerve the reverend old man, but boldly entering the cell, preſented himſelf before him in ſilence and ſuſpenſe, while the anchorite ſurveyed him with an equal mixture of ſurprize and ſatisfaction.

CHAP. XV.

THE HERMIT AND HIS CELL.

NARCONAH ſtarted at the ſound when the old hermit ſpoke, for it was the firſt decided voice of a human being he had ever heard, ſave that of Alcovan and his own.

At length he ventured to ſpeak, and the old man was equally pleaſed at the mild tone of his voice and the elegant ſimplicity and youthful beauty of his appearance, for Narconah had now entered his eighteenth year, amid the blooms of health and the elegance of nature, unſpoiled by art, and beautified by the charms of unſophiſticated ſimplicity.

The

The old anchorite roſe, and courteouſly invited him to ſit, offering him at the ſame time his own ſtool. Narconah ſeeing another was going to reach it, when the old man ſtept before him—" Touch it not," ſaid he, " that ſtool is ſacred—ſacred to the memory of one whoſe virtues I lament, ſince they exiſt no more, and now ſerve only to render recollection painful. She was beautiful as the morning of the ſpring, as the ſun that riſes in a clear ſky, and ſmiles in the benignant face of heaven; but ſhe is gone from me, and with her my peace, my happineſs is gone. But I have peace with heaven, and there I hope for happineſs. I have ſought it on earth, but have ſought where it could not be found; for content is often fixed on the attainment of a diſtant object, which, when we have

reached with toil and pain, we find unprovided with what we ſeek, but imagine we behold it removed to one ſtill farther on in the road of life. Thus we purſue it, thus we ſee it from time to time within our reach, and from time to time, as we are about to graſp it, ſee it fly from us, till we ſink at the end, overcome with fatigue, and exhauſted with the labour of a long and fruitleſs ſearch."

He then took his eyes from the ſtool, regarded Narconah as if to claim his attention, and proceeded— "It was there that ſhe was wont to ſit, when I have ſeen the ſmile of heaven and innocence in her face, and dwelt with rapture on the ſenſe and ſweetneſs that flowed from her tongue. But ſhe is gone, heaven knows whither! Heaven, who has puniſhed the

the too fond heart of an old and doating father!"

"Was it your friend?" ſaid Narconah, ſeeing the tears chaſe each other down his furrowed cheeks—"And is that friend dead?"

"It was my daughter," ſaid the old man, "it is three years ſince theſe eyes beheld her; and I fear that death will cloſe them ere they ſee her more."

He then ſat down upon the ground, obſerving the youth before him, whoſe eyes, like his own, were ſwimming with tears. Narconah ſeated himſelf on the ground cloſe by the old man, and took his withered hand between his.

"You

"You are afflicted father," ſaid he, "but I will come and comfort you; I have journeyed through theſe long and dreary vaults from the Caſtle, to eſcape from my impriſonment; but I will return thither that I may ſometimes come and comfort you."

"I aſk not comfort," interrupted the hermit, "from mortal aſſiſtance, when the aid of Alla is denied me. But come, partake of my meal, it is frugal, but wholeſome. I have now, thanks to the prophet, more humble pride in the produce of my own labour, than I once might have had in the ſumptuous diſplay of riches and munificence."

"That you are a being like myſelf," ſaid Narconah, "I cannot doubt, ſince you reſemble my other father

father Alcovan, whom I have left behind; but whom I ſhall ſoon ſee again, when I have viewed the exterior of our wall, and ſeen what country and what inhabitants are beyond it."

"You talk as one bred in ignorance," ſaid the anchorite, "With whom have you lived that you know not this?"

"With one," replied the Prince, who has taught me to believe there is no world beyond the ſmall ſpace occupied by ourſelves; and who would fain have had me believe the celeſtial conſtellations, and ſyſtems of ſtars and planets, were created by Providence for us, and us alone."

"Indeed,"

"Indeed," ſaid the anchorite—"then we will viſit the world together; for I am weary of this place, of which the fearful and hidden myſteries ſhall be one day revealed,—when the ſun of joy ſhall ariſe from behind the clouds of adverſity, or when the hand of death ſhall have laid me and my ſorrows in the duſt."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

A PROJECTED EXPEDITION.

THE entrance of the hermit's cell was ſmall, and when they came to it, Narconah caſt his eyes around him—his heart bounded with delight over the plains and diſtant hills, he looked back upon the walls of his priſon with ſenſations of joy, mingled with regret, when he conſidered the diſtreſs Alcovan muſt experience on diſcovering he had left him—he communicated theſe ſentiments to the hermit, who encouraged him to proceed—" My ſon," ſaid he " I know not the motives which actuated thoſe who confined you within theſe walls; but much, I fear, their intention

tion was not good. You tell me you have lived eighteen years in the world, in ignorance, and ſolitude; that you have been inſtructed to believe the boundaries of creation were within your own eye, and that the immenſity of ſpace above our heads, and all the hoſt of planets, which inhabit it (which are but as an atom in the ſpace they occupy, to that which is around them) was created for you alone, by the wiſe hand and direction of Omnipotence."

"What I underſtand by Omnipotence," interrupted Narconah, "is the regulating hand of Providence, which ſtamps the form of nature, and guides by immutable laws, the great the univerſal ſyſtem. But that theſe things could not be otherwiſe than they are, I alſo believe, and that the

ſun

ſun in the centre, and all the planets revolving around it, requires not a ſupernatural hand, ſince their courſe is regulated by nature, and wants no aid from other inviſible cauſes than the counterpoiſing powers of gravity and attraction."

"With what wretch have you lived," ſaid the hermit, "that the divine laws of Mahomet, and even the exiſtence of the great Creator, has been concealed from you?"

"I am ignorant of whom you ſpeak," ſaid Narconah.

"Unhappy youth!" interrupted the old man, "before we proceed, the laws of our prophet ſhall be laid before you.—Read with reverence and attention the Holy Book I ſhall put

put into your hands, and let conviction follow every ſentence as you ſtudy it." As he thus ſpoke he led him into the cell, and putting into his hands a Koran, left him alone, to gather herbs, and provide his cuſtomary meal.

Narconah's curioſity was leſs excited by the book before him, than his aſtoniſhment was rouſed by the extraordinary manner of the old man, and the ſingular appearance of his habitation.

The mouth of the cave was a ſmall aperture, not more than ſufficient to admit one perſon at a time, and deſcending by ſome ſteps to the outer apartment—he found the cave divided or hewn out into three cells; the outer one was the place in which

which the hermit ſlept, and uſually abided, and the inner one the apartment in which he offered up his devotions; one ſtill more retired and ſecret, and to which his eye was directed by accident, was that in which his daughter had formerly ſlept—here Narconah could not gain admiſſion; for before the opening he found ſeveral ſticks faſtened acroſs, forming a kind of wicker work, and evidently placed there to prevent the intruſion of ſtrangers. As Narconah imagined this to be the caſe, he proceeded no farther.

In the outer cell hung the hermit's ſcrip, which he had left behind him, and a ſcymitar, of which Narconah knew not then the uſe, ſuſpended by its ſide. After having viewed

viewed the place ſufficiently, he ſat down, and opened the Alcoran. He had read for ſome time before the hermit returned, and had entered into the ſubject with all that intereſt which it is known to excite.

The hermit finding him buſily engaged, did not interrupt him; till at length, Narconah perceiving him, cloſed the book—"It is a fine hiſtory," ſaid he.

"I would not interrupt you," ſaid the old man, "read on, and purſue the path of information; ſtudy, and you will find wiſdom—that the power of Alla may be revealed."

Narconah ſat ſeriouſly to the ſtudy of the holy book, and in a few days had

had plunged ſufficiently deep into the ſubject, to enable him to converſe and diſpute with his inſtructor.

The virtuous and benignant ſentiments that fell from the reverend old man's lips, made their due impreſſion on his heart; but he could not reconcile opinions which were new to him, nor enter ſpeedily into a theory ſo ſerious and extenſive.

After ſeveral arguments had been urged by the old hermit, which failed of that conviction he expected them to carry, he began to reflect on the moſt probable method of opening his mind to the ſenſe of that religion he held ſo ſacred, and of improving his heart by convincing his underſtanding. In order to effect this benevolent purpoſe, he formed the

the painful reſolution of leaving his peaceful habitation, in order to lead his young diſciple through ſuch ſcenes of life as he thought calculated to ſatisfy his mind, and fulfil the purpoſe he had in view.

This intention he communicated to Narconah, who was enraptured at the idea of the intended expedition. The hermit having placed every thing in order in his cell, they prepared for their departure with the morning's dawn.

CHAP.

CHAP. XVII.

NARCONAH AND THE HERMIT SET FORWARD ON THEIR JOURNEY.

ON quitting the cavern they rolled large ſtones and branches before its mouth, and then proceeded on their way; the converſation naturally recurring to the ſubject of the preceding day.

The romantic beauty of the ſcene around them; the glorious riſe of the ſun from behind the mountains; the ſinging of the birds, and the various other beauties of reviving nature, warmed the heart of Narconah with delight.

The old hermit animadverted on theſe beautiful ſcenes perpetually, and after extolling the wondrous works of nature, traced that nature to its ſource, and deduced ſuch arguments from every reflection, as aimed at the general purſuance of his plan. The man who is vicious in his own actions only, is leſs vicious than he who endeavours to make others depraved alſo; and he who himſelf practiſes virtue, is eſſentially leſs virtuous than one who endeavours to make others as virtuous as himſelf.

The good man under whoſe care and protection Narconah had placed himſelf, lamented to find his endeavours to convince his young and intelligent, though uninſtructed mind, ſhould prove fruitleſs; yet he looked forward

forward to the time when reaſon, and the truths that would operate on his mind in the ſcenes which they ſhould witneſs in the world, would convince an underſtanding which he perceived was naturally ſtrong, but which, to put the beſt conſtruction on it, had been cultivated through an erroneous and miſtaken medium. For the preſent, therefore, he gave up the point he had in view, and in noticing and encouraging the aſtoniſhment of Narconah, forgot his own ſorrows for a time, and aſſumed ſuch a degree of cheerfulneſs in his countenance and converſation, as beſt aſſimilated with, and rendered him agreeable to, his young companion.

Encouraged by this appearance of frankneſs in the old man, Narconah, as they journeyed onward, often aſked

queſtions relative to his life and hiſtory; and the evaſive anſwers which he from time to time received, and the ſighs which involuntarily eſcaped with thoſe anſwers, excited in him ſo much curioſity, as induced him to requeſt the entire hiſtory of his life; urging, that he was curious to hear the account of one who had lived equally long in the world with Alcovan, and from the wider extenſion of his views, muſt have been enabled to learn ſo much more, and to inſtruct ſo much better.

The old anchorite pauſed till the requeſt was repeated, and then replied with a ſigh:—

" The hiſtory you deſire to hear, is that of a life chequered by the fluctuating events of extreme for-

tune

tune—I will one day relate it, though the relation muſt wound me; not from the recollection of circumſtances which are never abſent from my mind, nor from the recital of thoſe ſorrows I have formerly experienced, but alone from the proſpect before me, that the future may augment inſtead of alleviating my diſtreſſes. The ſorrows long gone by may be healed by the balſam which is to be found in oblivion; but preſent anguiſh, and the proſpect of future diſtreſs, know no aſſiſtance but from the balmy effects of religion, and the lenient conſolations of hope. But ſolitude is no way calculated to produce this deſirable forgetfulneſs; ſilence and the ſurrounding ſcenes, in retirement imperceptibly conſpire to excite meditation, in which, though the mind is ſoothed

by ſadneſs, the unpleaſant ſcenes of life never fail to preſent themſelves, and to revive painful ſenſations by augmenting apparent evils."

"Surely," interrupted Narconah, "ſilence and meditation cannot have had that effect on a mind ſo well qualified by nature, and fortified by reaſon, as yours is, to withſtand its effects; for my own part, I have never experienced thoſe ſenſations you deſcribe, for ſolitude was always welcome to me, and even the company of Alcovan was ſometimes a reſtraint upon my thoughts and meditations."

"Had I a heart as immaculate as yours," replied the old man—"A heart as free from remorſe and anguiſh, I might then be happy, but it

was

was otherwiſe ordained; you may bleſs that confinement in ignorance which has kept you innocent, ſince they only can be happy who are innocent, and thoſe who inhabit the world cannot long remain ſo."

The various beauties that preſented themſelves by the way, offered ſufficient ſources of converſation; and juſt as they ſaw the evening approach, they reached a ſmall cottage in the neighbourhood of Bonena, where they ſtopped in order to paſs the night.

CHAP. XVIII.

A HAPPY POOR MAN, AND A DISAPPOINTED LOVER.

COZMIN, the old hermit in queſtion, when they entered the cottage readily procured a lodging; and being ſeated together by the fire, he began to make reflections on the ſcene around him, in order to excite thoſe of Narconah. The young Creole however made but few, the field was too vaſt for his infant conception; and what reflections he did make, were too confuſed and too irregular to be expreſſed. At length, however, his ideas began to concentrate, and he aſked ſeveral queſtions of the old man, which he anſwered

anſwered much to his ſatisfaction and inſtruction; but Narconah could form no conception of the nature of ſuch beings as he deſcribed women to be; and could only conceive a faint idea of them, from his deſcription of angels, and the beauties of the daughters of Paradiſe.

Of the cottagers, Narconah at firſt ſaw no one but an old man, the father of the family; but had not remained long when his ſon and daughter, a youth of about eighteen, and a girl of eleven, came in. Narconah readily comprehended the difference between the ſoftneſs of the one ſex, and the robuſt nature of the other, and ſtopped his enquiry, becauſe he found an end to his doubts.

The old cottager was of a lively diſpoſition, and a hearty conſtitution; he told them he had married at forty — that his wife was alive, and not yet returned from market— and that he was as happy in his children as his heart could wiſh.

Narconah was delighted to find the old man ſo happy, and joined heartily in his mirth.

The cottager produced the beſt fare his habitation afforded, and ſung till the travellers fell faſt aſleep.

Narconah dreamed all night of what he had ſeen and heard, and concluded himſelf tranſported to a new world. He awoke not next day till rouſed by the heat of the ſun upon his face, for the fatigues

of

of the preceding day had oppreſſed him; he roſe immediately, and found the old cottager at work in his garden, and Cozmin with him; they were diſcourſing on the properties of plants, on which ſubject Narconah was able to inſtruct them both, and Cozmin afterwards taking him aſide, "You ſee here, my ſon," ſaid he, "the effects of religion on the mind of a virtuous old man.—This poor cottager, who earns his daily bread by hard labour, is happy and contented, the greateſt monarch that exiſts, and I may ſay the happieſt too, is leſs happy than he; he tells me he was early inſtructed in principles of probity and virtue, and is now happy, becauſe he has not materially deviated from them."

"By principles of virtue, you no doubt mean what you have already

denominated religious principles," ſaid Narconah.

"They may be diſtinct, though they ſhould be united principles," replied Cozmin; "a man, it is true, may be virtuous in his actions without being religious in his ſentiments; but abating the errors to which all are liable, a man cannot be truly religious in his ſentiments without being virtuous in his actions. Virtue ſhould produce religion, but religion does produce virtue; of this we ſhall ſpeak more hereafter:—in the meantime we will purſue our journey; proofs will preſent themſelves, and conviction will ariſe from thoſe proofs."

Taking leave of the happy old cottager, with thanks for his hoſpitality,

pitality, and good wiſhes for his proſperity, they ſat forward on their journey; and he returned whiſtling to his work.

The old man's character and behaviour, and the novelty of the dreſs and appearance of the young girl his daughter, furniſhed them with converſation for a conſiderable way, till they fell into company with a young man, who was journeying the ſame road as themſelves towards Fez.

A diſcontent was ſtrongly viſible in his countenance, which ſeemed to proceed from diſappointment in ſome favourite object that he had been in purſuit of, and this upon enquiry they found to be the caſe; he was by birth an Egyptian, and had

had followed an Algerine noble from Grand Cairo, to Morocco, in the capacity of ſecretary, in order to take poſſeſſion of an eſtabliſhment which the Algerine had promiſed to procure for him, and which he hoped would have enabled him to provide handſomely for his miſtreſs, whom he was doatingly fond of. The Algerine noble, however, for whom he had tranſacted a great deal of buſineſs, in hopes of a liberal reward, turned out to be no other than an Algerine Corſair, whoſe buſineſs at Grand Cairo had been to diſpoſe privately of ſuch goods as they had taken, and which they dared not to expoſe to public ſale in their own country.

The young man was now returning home, poorer than he ſet out, and totally

totally deſpairing of being able to obtain his miſtreſs; which loſs, added to that of his ſplendid hopes, had given him the air of chagrin which our travellers at firſt obſerved in him.

Having journeyed a long time together, and his ſtory having excited alternately their mirth and pity for the whole day, they ſtopped at the firſt houſe they came to in a little village, and left the young man, with condolence and good advice, to purſue his unfortunate journey.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIX.

THE TRAVELLERS PURSUE THEIR JOURNEY.

THE reflections made by Cozmin on this young man's character, were of a different nature from thoſe on the old cottager.

He pointed out the extreme folly of expecting too much from proſpects of felicity, or of placing too great a dependance on the promiſes of others. He confeſſed the young man's mortification was natural, but it was one of thoſe leſſons of inſtruction which are not to be inculcated by precept, and can only be profitable

fitable when paid for by experience.

Narconah thought he ſhould not have borne the diſappointment ſo well; and demanded of Cozmin, if the moderation of his grief was not the effect of the ſame religion which had cauſed the cheerfulneſs and felicity of the happy cottager?

Cozmin replied, that although the youth in queſtion had ſuffered a diſappointment, which at his time of life muſt have been very ſevere, it was not probably an evil of ſuch magnitude as to require the aid of religion to ſupport him under it—that the operation of reaſon, in the mind of a rational being, would be ſufficiently powerful for that purpoſe—that the aid of religion was of more

more decided ſervice in caſes of ſerious calamity, when every earthly hope was cut off, and when the mind had loſt every other prop to depend upon for ſupport.

Narconah ſaid, he conſidered the religion which could do ſo much as a very deſirable attainment, and hoped that if ever calamity ſhould befal him, he ſhould be enabled to gain poſſeſſion of it.

Cozmin, who was delighted to find he had awakened his mind to this ſerious conſideration, proceeded in his diſcourſe. He obſerved, that it was neceſſary to acquire early habits of religion, ſince calamity would not wait for its acquiſition, and the hour of misfortune was too late to ſet about obtaining it. He concluded

cluded with urging Narconah to think ſeriouſly of the advice he ſhould give him, and to meditate, in ſecret, on the importance of the ſubject before him.

Narconah now became thoughtful, and at times penſive; he however aſked many queſtions of his friend relative to his own ſtory, and longed to ſee every thing of which he had heard him ſpeak; and above all, was deſirous of beholding one of thoſe beautiful women, of whom he had heard him ſpeak in ſuch high terms of commendation.

Cozmin, who knew to how great a danger he would be expoſed when this did happen, kept as much out of the way of the public roads as poſſible; there was no danger to be apprehended

apprehended from the lower orders of women, whom they met at the inns, and other places where they ſtopped; but his fear was from thoſe whom they might probably meet on their firſt entrance into the capital. By ſhort journeys they travelled on towards the kingdom of Fez. Narconah ſaw many things which aſtoniſhed him, and many which delighted him; but could not comprehend what had been Alcovan's motive for keeping him from the knowledge of ſo beautiful a world, and from ſo many beings like himſelf, who might by their company have contributed to render his life ſo much happier, and his mind ſo much more intelligent.

Cozmin in vain attempted to explain to him the different paſſions which gave laws to the actions of men.

men. The Prince, whoſe mind was all purity and virtue, could not conceive the nature of evil, and imagined that to follow the immediate dictates of every propenſity muſt be right, becauſe he had never been taught that any propenſity could be wrong. They met with many adventures as they journeyed on towards Fez, where Cozmin propoſed to ſpend ſome time, before they proceeded to Algiers, whither he was deſirous of leading his pupil, as a populous and therefore inſtructive road towards the kingdom of Egypt.

They now approached the magnificent and flouriſhing city above mentioned, Narconah already enjoying in fancy the beauties and novelties which would preſent themſelves to his view, and which, from the

the account of his friend, he had learned would be very numerous.

Cozmin beguiled the way with pleaſing leſſons of wiſdom; and every day that rolled over them, added new ſenſe and new virtues to the enquiring mind and amiable heart of Narconah.

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

ALCOVAN'S REFLECTIONS AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF NARCONAH.

IN the mean time Alcovan, as it may be imagined, on awaking from his reverie, had miſſed the Prince ſoon after his departure; and his anxiety on his own account became ſtill greater, as he became more aſſured of the abſolute loſs of his pupil.

He did not abandon himſelf to that extravagant deſpair which he had formerly felt, but ſearched for a conſiderable time with deliberate coolneſs; judging the Prince could not have found any means to make his eſcape,

eſcape, as he had kept a conſtant and watchful eye upon his actions.

After ſome time, however, the Prince's abſence became more alarming, and Alcovan's apprehenſions more acute; yet he ſtill preſerved coolneſs and thought, and recurring to the ſcene which had paſſed ſo many years before, and the extraordinary diſappearance and recovery of the Prince at that time, he readily conceived thoſe wonders could be no other than the works of a ſupernatural power, and became ſeriouſly alarmed, on that account, at the ſilence with which he was ſurrounded, and the ſolitude from which he found he could not eaſily emancipate himſelf. Thoſe ſenſations, therefore, which had formerly tormented him, returned

returned with double force upon his mind; and the continual agitation which they created, ſerved to deprive him at times almoſt of recollection of the ſtate into which he had thus unfortunately brought himſelf, by undertaking a charge of ſo much conſequence, and of ſo ſerious and important a nature.

Several moons paſſed over in reſtleſs anxiety.—He was in perpetual dread of ſomething unknown, and of which his apprehenſions only could give him any idea.

The appearances to which he had been a witneſs in the caſtle; the unaccountable loſs of the Creole in his infancy, together with the other concurrent circumſtances, and his preſent diſappearance, reduced his diſ-

treſſing doubts to an equally diſtreſſing certainty, and he became perſuaded that he was then inhabiting the abode of ſpirits, if not the haunt of the agents of darkneſs. Oppreſſed by this conſideration, he was perpetually watchful, and perpetually unhappy.

It need not be a ſubject of wonder, that guilty minds, which are conſtantly haunted by the recollection of crimes, ſhould be always reſtleſs and unhappy. In inſtances of this nature, the moſt harmleſs objects are converted by the ſlighteſt effects of imagination into the moſt terrific and alarming; and when the operations of reaſon are once ſubverted, there remains no hope of recovery, as in phyſical diſtempers, while memory

mory remains to goad with perpetual and bitter recollection.

Medicine may cure bodily infirmities, and time may heal the wounds inflicted by adverſity; but there is no antidote to aid the ſick mind, when corroded by guilt, and embittered by unceaſing remorſe. Alcovan, however, had no poſitive guilt to torment him, and yet he was uneaſy and unhappy. His mind, as we have before obſerved, was naturally ſtrong; but there is no capacity ſo extenſively cultivated but what ſome part may be found unenlightened, and open to the failings and weakneſſes of other men.

The impreſſions made on the minds of youth are generally light; and, unleſs ſtrengthened by repetition, are

ſeldom laſting; but when impreſſions are firſt received in age, they penetrate much deeper; and by taking a firmer hold on the heart, are of longer duration, and are ſeldom to be ſeparated through life from the memory and imagination.

The firm power of Alcovan's mind being thus ſhook, ſunk into a ſenſeleſs ſtate of imbecility. He often ſat beneath the ſhade of ſome large tree in the iſland and thought of the Prince, and the wretchedneſs of his own condition, till the powers of recollection failed him, and on recovering himſelf, would again range the iſland, and utter Narconah's name in a low voice; or watch the motion of the clouds on the banks of the ſtream, in painful and melancholy muſing. He was firmly perſuaded the

the Prince had been led by the phantom to ſome ſecret place of the caſtle or iſland, which he knew not of, and after which all human ſearch muſt prove ineffectual.

In the meantime the meſſengers of Selim attended regularly at the outer gate. Alcovan from the firſt, reſolved to keep profoundly ſecret the Prince's departure, till the time arrived that it ſhould be diſcovered by the Emperor, when he came, at the expiration of the twentieth year, to liberate them from their confinement.

His mind at length ſettled into a calm deſperation. He thought if the Creole ſhould not return, his death was inevitable; for he knew the Emperor too well to ſuppoſe he

would pardon his apparent negligence; and yet he took no ſteps whatever by which it was probable he might have been enabled to eſcape from the iſland, and the fate which threatened him.

Thus the months rolled over his head, ſometimes haunted by fear, and always tormented by reflection; and ſometimes loſt in deſpair, and enveloped in dejection and inſenſibility.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

ALCOVAN MAKES A DISCOVERY IN THE CASTLE.

CIRCUMSTANCE concurred with the evil genius of Alcovan, to render his preſent life and confinement miſerable. He was one day pacing the great gallery, and muſing on the ſingularity of his fortune, when a ſudden guſt of wind blew aſide the tapeſtry, and he perceived a ſmall trunk, on which his attention became inſtantly rivetted. Any new object of attention was of importance to Alcovan; his mind had long been wrapped in inſenſibility, and he had ſeen the latter hours of his life paſs in a tedious vacuity. The flame of curioſity

rioſity that was now kindled in his mind, had therefore the more fuel on which it could ſubſiſt, and he attempted not to extinguiſh it; he inſtantly flew to the trunk and endeavoured to force it open, but finding his utmoſt ſtrength inſufficient to the purpoſe, he returned to his chamber to find ſome implement to effect it. In the meantime his thoughts were employed in ſpeculations reſpecting the contents of the trunk thus cautiouſly hidden and accidently diſcovered; and when it at length yielded to his arm, he thought his labour well repaid by the diſcovery of a long ſcroll, which he ſeized and carried haſtily to his apartment. The contents of the ſcroll were cloſely connected with Alcovan's preſent ſtate and his preſent apprehenſions; and he read with

with fixed attention and encreaſing horror, the following words:

"I am the murderer of my brother. In a ſecret vault of this caſtle lie the remains of MOLOC ALCANZOR BELI. The operation of conſcience has been acknowledged by ſucceſſive generations—I feel its dreadful effects; its exiſtence I once thought the chimerical invention of imagination. I am now fatally convinced it is cœval with creation, and implanted by nature in the mind of man. My mind is haunted by recollection and remorſe; the ſpirit of my brother is before me always, and the furies torment me without ceaſing; when I ſleep, I dream I am a murderer, and when I am awake, I recollect it. Thus I am tormented without the hope of eſcape; thus

thus is my mind diſeaſed without the hope of cure. I cannot enjoy the poſſeſſions I have gained by fratricide.—What I now write I leave to him who may come after me; but whoſoever findeth it, let him depart this ſcene of guilt, this ſpot haunted by an injured ſpirit.—In this place walks my brother's ſpirit, which calls aloud for vengeance—to every chamber that I viſit does he follow me—to every remote corner does he purſue me; the moſt hideous forms that an unburthened mind can create were lovely to thoſe which are for ever before me. Deſpair and inward agony are the fruits that I have gathered from that ſoil which promiſed me a luxuriant produce. The mind which ſwayed my actions is too hardened for repentance. I repent not of the deed which I have done,

done, but for the ill-effects it has produced. I murdered my brother that I might enjoy his wealth; I have obtained, but cannot enjoy it. I abandon this caſtle with a reſolution never to return. The ſame boldneſs that plunged the dagger to my brother's heart, will not carry it to my own, elſe would I ſoon relieve the torments that I endure, and bury them in endleſs night.—Conſcience has made me a true coward. My wealth will purchaſe the diſcoveries of learning to cure me when I am ſick; but learning has not diſcovered yet a medicine for the mind. I dare not withdraw my eyes from my writing;—before me, I know, ſits my brother's ghoſt. Injured ſpirit! wilt thou never ceaſe to purſue me? I care not; thou mayeſt ſhackle my mind, but my limbs

limbs thou canſt not. I will ſhake off the chains that bind me to torture, and fly from this deteſted ſpot. ——The extremity of deſperation has made me calm; ſome it would have made mad. The world is all before me; proſperity has deceived me, I'll try if death has ought to give me eaſe.——It has—and for the future, its torments cannot be greater than thoſe of guilt I now feel."

When Alcovan had finiſhed the ſcroll, he dared not look around him; ſo decided a confirmation of all his fears was too agonizing for endurance. He expected to ſee the ſpirit of the murdered Moloc in his chamber, and he trembled at every joint. Every guſt of wind he thought an ærial motion of the ſpirit near him, and every ſlight noiſe he conceived

ceived an indication of its immediate approach. From this ſtate he was at length rouzed by ſhame; he recollected that he was no murderer, and had, therefore, nothing to fear for himſelf; he felt the folly of thoſe terrors, for which he would have corrected a child, and endeavoured to account for the imbecility of his own mind, which had ſuffered him to be thus agitated and alarmed. He recurred to the reflections of Cicero, "That conſcience is the internal puniſhment of man, when his crimes are hidden from public juſtice; that his own conſcious heart, and evil meditations, will fill him with terror and conſtantly diſturb his reſt;"—and then conſidered, that as he had no guilt to diſturb him, and yet felt the effects deſcribed, the philoſopher had miſtaken their cauſe; he, however, thought his own fears might

poſſibly be only the effects of an unmanly weakneſs, and after more mature deliberation, remembered the ſame philoſopher had otherwiſe accounted for his diſturbed ſtate of mind, when he obſerves, that thoſe minds are moſt apt to give way to imaginary terrors, which are not ſupported by religious confidence. By thus examining the ſtate of his own heart, Alcovan acquired ſome degree of compoſure, though not enough to enable him to riſe from his ſeat without emotion. The fatal ſcroll, which had thus confirmed all his apprehenſions, he lay carefully by, and exerted all the energy of his mind to eraſe the gloomy and terrific impreſſion which it had left there.

It was natural for a mind thus diſturbed, to look onward to the future, and to ſhake off the incumbrance of the

the preſent as ſoon as poſſible. The greateſt pleaſures and the greateſt pains of our lives, are enjoyed and ſuffered by recollection of the paſt, and anticipation of the future; the preſent will ſeldom bear a compariſon with either one or the other. In retroſpection we are willing to forget unfavourable events, if our lives have not been ſingularly unfortunate; and of futurity, if the mind is not deeply corroded by preſent misfortune, we are always inclined to ſelect the moſt favourable picture; but Alcovan could not enjoy by anticipation any of thoſe favourable ſcenes which minds, tolerably at eaſe, ſo readily diſcover. When he looked forward, the proſpect was ſtill more gloomy than the preſent; and the only ray of hope that illumed the dark road by which

he

he was to journey on, he ſaw often obſcured, or temporarily extinguiſhed, by the trembling form of fear, or the haggard figure of deſpair. The actual appearance of the dreaded ſpirit had been leſs terrible to Alcovan than the weariſome expectation which kept him in a conſtant perturbation, till it at length drove him into a ſtate of temporary madneſs.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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